

# interpretive guidance: risk assessment and planning

## guidance

Facilities are required to develop and maintain an emergency preparedness plan. The plan must include all of the required elements under the standard. The plan must be reviewed and updated at least annually. The annual review must be documented to include the date of the review and any updates made to the emergency plan based on the review. The format of the emergency preparedness plan that a facility uses is at its discretion.

An emergency plan is one part of a facility's emergency preparedness program. The plan provides the framework, which includes conducting facility-based and community-based risk assessments that will assist a facility in addressing the needs of their patient populations, along with identifying the continuity of business operations which will provide support during an actual emergency. In addition, the emergency plan supports, guides, and ensures a facility's ability to collaborate with local emergency preparedness officials. This approach is specific to the location of the facility and considers particular hazards most likely to occur in the surrounding area. These include, but are not limited to:

- Natural disasters
- Man-made disasters
- Facility-based disasters that include but are not limited to:
  - Care-related emergencies;
  - Equipment and utility failures, including but not limited to power, water, gas, etc.;
  - Interruptions in communication, including cyber-attacks;
  - Loss of all or portion of a facility; and
  - Interruptions to the normal supply of essential resources, such as water, food, fuel (heating, cooking, and generators), and in some cases, medications and medical supplies (including medical gases, if applicable).

When evaluating potential interruptions to the normal supply of essential services, the facility should take into account the likely durations of such interruptions. Arrangements or contracts to re-establish essential utility services during an emergency should describe the timeframe within which the contractor is required to initiate services after the start of the emergency, how they will be procured and delivered in the facility's local area, and that the contractor will continue to supply the essential items throughout and to the end of emergencies of varying duration.

## survey procedures

- Verify the facility has an emergency preparedness plan by asking to see a copy of the plan
- Ask facility leadership to identify the hazards (e.g. natural, man-made, facility, geographic, etc.) that were identified in the facility's risk assessment and how the risk assessment was conducted.
- Review the plan to verify it contains all of the required elements
- Verify that the plan is reviewed and updated annually by looking for documentation of the date of the review and updates that were made to the plan based on the review

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## definitions incorporated

### emergency preparedness plan

Provides the framework for the emergency preparedness program. The emergency plan is developed based on facility- and community-based risk assessments that assist a facility in anticipating and addressing facility, patient, staff and community needs and support continuity of business operations.

### emergency preparedness program

Describes a facility's comprehensive approach to meeting the health, safety and security needs of the facility, its staff, their patient population and community prior to, during and after an emergency or

disaster. The program encompasses four core elements: an Emergency Plan that is based on a Risk Assessment and incorporates an all hazards approach; Policies and Procedures; Communication Plan; and the Training and Testing Program.

## facility-based

The emergency preparedness program is specific to the facility. It includes but is not limited to hazards specific to a facility based on its geographic location; dependent patient/resident/client and community population; facility type and potential surrounding community assets- i.e. rural area versus a large metropolitan area.

## risk assessment

Describes a process facilities use to assess and document potential hazards that are likely to impact their geographical region, community, facility and patient population and identify gaps and challenges that should be considered and addressed in developing the emergency preparedness program. The term risk assessment is meant to be comprehensive, and may include a variety of methods to assess and document potential hazards and their impacts. The healthcare industry has also referred to risk assessments as a Hazard Vulnerability Assessments or Analysis (HVA) as a type of risk assessment commonly used in the healthcare industry.

## emergency

A hazard impact causing adverse physical, social, psychological, economic or political effects that challenges the ability to respond rapidly and effectively. It requires a stepped-up capacity and capability (call-back procedures, mutual aid, etc.) to meet the expected outcome, and commonly requires change from routine management methods to an incident command process to achieve the expected outcome (see “disaster” for important contrast between the two terms).

## disaster

A hazard impact causing adverse physical, social, psychological, economic or political effects that challenges the ability to respond rapidly and effectively. Despite a stepped-up capacity and capability

(call-back procedures, mutual aid, etc.) and change from routine management methods to an incident command/management process, the outcome is lower than expected compared with a smaller scale or lower magnitude impact (see “emergency” for important contrast between the two terms).

## all-hazards approach

An integrated approach to emergency preparedness that focuses on identifying hazards and developing emergency preparedness capacities and capabilities that can address those as well as a wide spectrum of emergencies or disasters. This approach includes preparedness for natural, man-made, and or facility emergencies that may include but is not limited to: care-related emergencies; equipment and power failures; interruptions in communications, including cyber-attacks; loss of a portion or all of a facility; and, interruptions in the normal supply of essentials, such as water and food. All facilities must develop an all-hazards emergency preparedness program and plan.

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## note

Unless otherwise indicated, the general use of the terms “facility” or “facilities” in this Appendix refers to all provider and suppliers addressed in this appendix. This is a generic moniker used in lieu of the specific provider or supplier noted in the regulations. For varying requirements, the specific regulation for that provider/supplier will be noted as well.